Emotional Intelligence:
A Social Radar to Communication Competence

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John Egon Henry Svensson was born in 1913 on a farm in Southern Sweden. At a young age, his career was decided for him, as his father was a farmer, so he too would become a farmer. Despite having little formal education, Egon became quite proficient at running a large farm. Now my Father did not marry until later on in life, when at the age of 46 he had his only child: myself. Although my father was cognitively intelligent, much of his success was due to his personal and social competencies – my Father was very emotionally intelligent. He was as comfortable working in the field with his laborers as he was entertaining formally in his home. Egon was just as content in overalls as he was in a tuxedo. My father was certainly not a flawless man, but he was the role model that shaped my life significantly.

References


The ultimate goal of all these assessments is to assess organizational needs, measure personal strengths and limitations, provide feedback, maximize choice, encourage participation, link goals to values, adjust expectations and assess readiness. One of my previous students works as a manager at the County of Riverside. Through her assessments she found out from her direct reports that she lacked empathy and social skills. She did some self-reflection and realized that this was true, and she committed to a real change during her next 18 months of her graduate program. The manager started taking about twenty minutes every morning to walk around and ask her employees how they are doing. She asked questions about their kids and received feedback from them on work-related situations. When this very committed student took her post-test, her scores by her direct reports had increased dramatically, and the work environment had become so much more positive for all participants involved. I would hope that when we do commit to change that we will conduct a continual evaluation where we will remain open to feedback and re-assessments always!

In closing, we have explored the impact that the principles of emotional intelligence can have on the concept of communication competence. If we realize the power of being more effective and appropriate communicators, we can share a vision that inspires people to do their best work despite living in turbulent and challenging times. Daniel Goleman (2006) recommends “that we take stock of the people in our lives and the pleasure we get in being with them, and try to optimize our day by spending time with them in satisfying ways.”

One of the reasons I love to be in a classroom environment is because of the dialogue that I have with my students. These interactions are so rich and nourishing that it leaves me with a great sense of fulfillment.

My father taught me about loving human connections. Suffice it to say that although my father did not have the benefit of a college education, he still had the great ability to instill some of the competencies of emotional intelligence through the plain example of his life. One of his proudest moments was when I finished graduate school, and he flew 5,000 miles to see me receive my diploma. My dean at the time shared in front of at least 1,000 people that my father, Egon Svensson, was here from Sweden to see his only child graduate. My father was 74 years old with very limited English skills. With his eternal optimism he said “only a daughter of mine could do this.” I think he died an atheist. So wherever you are dad, I know you are taking a day off to be here to cheer me on.

Thank you.

Eva joined the Chaffey faculty in September of 1989, and has been teaching a variety of classes in her field. With Eva’s emphasis in Intercultural Communication, she will be teaching this class in China this coming June for four weeks. The love for teaching that will carry her to China has earned her academic and teaching excellence awards at both Chaffey College (Faculty of the Year, 1997, 2003) and California State University, Fullerton (Outstanding Professor, 2000).

Ms. Rose has served as the Director of the Honors Program for the last six years, expanding it to become one of the premier programs in the country. This has given her a lot of joy traveling with her wonderful students to many conferences where they have represented the best of Chaffey. Her students have presented in colleges and universities around the country.

On a personal note, if there is anything that comes as close to her heart as her family and students, it is Starbucks, Godiva Chocolate and Cakebread Chardonnay. During her minimal spare time, Rose enjoys reading, entertaining, and traveling to different cultures around the world. She has enjoyed repeated treks throughout Southeast Asia, tours within Europe, and adventures in Central and South America. But, her favorite spot is Christ Church, New Zealand. Most students with whom she interacts are changed by the loving environment that Eva brings. Eva’s intercultural experience makes it so that she is able to adapt to diverse audiences. As an Honors student, Richard Johnson states that “I would not be who I am today if it were not for Eva, who has molded me into the man that I have become.” A Phi Theta Kappa student, Tamira Hopkins says that “she is the first person that found out where I came from and did not turn her back on me. She encouraged me to be the best in all that I want to do.” Eva bridges the gap between teachers and students and makes them feel as though they can be whoever they want to be. After all of her hard work, we can only hope that she can end her time at Chaffey College with a dance of the YMCA.

- Ardon Alger, Faculty Senate President, April 2007

It appears that emotional intelligence is the most powerful force behind the factors that influence our professional success and everyday communication with others. Goleman (1995) predicts that as much as eighty percent of a person’s success in life is due to learned emotional intelligence, and only twenty percent is predicted by I.Q. We have been able to measure I.Q. for years, but it is not until recently tools measuring E.I. have been developed.

The Bar-On Model has been the first to develop the Emotional Quotient Inventory which is a self-report instrument of 133 items designed to assess emotional intelligence. Dr. Reuven Bar-On spent more than 19 years of research with more than 33,000 subjects to create a valid and reliable measuring tool. Dr. John Mayer and Dr. Peter Salovey created the Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale which is also a self-report measure that focuses on identifying, using, understanding, and managing emotions.

The most sophisticated instrument that has been created in this field is a 360-degree assessment called the Emotional Competency Inventory. This tool was developed by Richard Boyatzis and Daniel Goleman using twenty competencies based from Goleman’s research in the 90s. During the past four years, I’ve had the opportunity to work with this model at the School of Business at the University of Redlands. In the Masters of Management, we use this tool for the pre-test in the first class and the post-test for their last class. Each student is required to get at least ten people from different groups, such as managers, peers, and direct reports to assess this individual anonymously on a specific website.

The student is not able to look at the assessment results until a few people have participated in this inventory. I meet with each student to compare their own scores with those of their assessors. The goal is to have their scores well-matched, but of course, I see a lot of under-raters as well as over-raters. I have been fortunate to have at least three students from Chaffey College graduate from this program, and they have all been promoted because of their outstanding emotional intelligence. Because of their participation in this program, and I assume at least thirty of you in this audience have participated in doing these 360-degree surveys, many people have developed renewed self-awareness. Finally, we have a target to blame for all of this time-consuming work-me!
In doing the research on emotional intelligence, I noticed how this skill has a bearing on all levels at the workplace. Most interestingly, the dynamic of emotional intelligence has a unique and distinctive metamorphosis as one climbs to higher levels within an organization. Yet the impact of competencies at the front lines of an organization is essentially the same as the CEO (Chief Executive Officer). Both can make or break the organization. I was pleasantly surprised when I found out that last years management retreat here at Chaffey College focused on the E.Q. (emotional quotient) Map, which is one of the many instruments used to measure E.I. The quotation on this map that spoke to me directly was by A. R. Damasio, M.D. He writes “Reasoning / decision-making and emotion / feeling intersect in the brain... Feeling and emotions have a truly privileged status and exert a powerful influence on reasoning.”

More organizations are realizing that E.I. is an essential part of a corporate philosophy. The Swedish Telecommunication Company admits that “you don’t compete with products alone anymore, but how well you use your people.” Ketoin Murray, director of Communications at British Airways, reinforces this idea by emphasizing that “organizations going through the greatest change are those who need emotional intelligence the most” (Goleman, 1995). Daniel Goleman projects that in the next thirty years up to two thirds of Fortune 500 Companies will no longer prevail; only the adept ones will survive. While the current electronics processes – e-mails, voicemails, newsletters – are efficient in keeping employees aware, it is ineffective in keeping and building crucial member relationships and should not be used as a primary means of communication. Customer service is heightened when there are human-to-human interactions, and this interaction can lead to increased satisfaction in the organization. A happy organizational environment where employees feel respected reaps many benefits for all involved.

As I illustrated earlier in my speech, doctors who spend more time understanding their patients tend to be sued less. Frequently, they will create more respect in the doctor-patient relationship. A couple of months ago my husband wanted to change from Bank of America to another less fee-based bank. My first thought was “no way.” I truly care for all the bank-tellers in our branch, and I look forward to seeing them on a weekly basis. We made a decision to stay with this bank because of the emotional intelligence these tellers have. Organizations such as Starbucks, Southwest Airlines, Nordstrom, and many more are acutely aware of their people skills and so they are a joy to frequent. Many of our own departments here at Chaffey College also embrace the emotional intelligence competency. I want to highlight our Human Resource department, which is fairly large, and each

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**Emotional Intelligence:**

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Life confronts us with a wide array of challenges and being nominated for “Faculty Lecture of the Year” is one of them. After receiving the call regarding the nomination, I also got a phone call from a very dear colleague asking me to please accept this nomination this time. I did, and I am very honored to have been chosen to speak to you today about one of my greatest passions.

I was born an only child and raised on a farm in Sweden by a strong man who exemplified emotional intelligence (E.I.). My father, John Egon Henry Svensson, had a future already planned for him since the year he was born in 1913. He followed in his father’s footsteps and, with little education, managed to become quite proficient at running a large farm. My dad grew a variety of vegetables, four types of grain, and he housed 4,000 chickens that produced nearly as many eggs. All through junior high my nickname was “egg toddy” – I guess it could be worse! He was comfortable working in the field and was quite the entertainer at home, hosting with formal dinners and dancing late into the night. He was certainly not a flawless man, but he was the role model who significantly shaped my life. Because of my father’s influence, I cultivated an interest through my early academic career in the integration of both cognitive and emotional intelligence. I realized very early that these two are often bifurcated in academic culture. It became a personal goal of mine to advocate for the integration of both character and intellect, and thus I chose nursing as a career. I wanted to learn about helping people with the knowledge and the people skills that I started to develop.

With a nursing degree from Sweden, I decided to do some traveling before settling down. I met my American husband on a rooftop in Jerusalem, and it was love at first sight. Because of him, I came to the United States, and my studies took me down another road. I took my first Speech Communication class at Riverside City College, where I had a wonderful mentor and ended up majoring in this important field. My desire to help people was an underlying factor in my new American professional development.

With an eagerness to learn about the interpersonal communication field, I thought I had hit the mother lode when I first encountered Daniel Goleman ten years ago. His theory intrigued me because of the stoical cul-
tured. The Nordic winters are long, dark, and very cold. I remember going to school and only seeing daylight during lunch. I have realized that this kind of climate influences the very core of who we become: stoic, private, and somewhat cautious. Interpersonal communication is reserved for the nuclear family, and due to a variety of dysfunctions, it might not even happen at home. The alcohol abuse is high in Sweden, and while people drink, one might catch a glimpse of someone’s soul.

To compensate for these long winters, many families went to the Canary Islands for a week every February. I recall looking forward to feeling the sun, seeing palm trees, and rejoicing in the warm and open temperament of the Spanish people. As a young girl, I remember asking my parents why we couldn’t be as happy and fun as the natives. My parents just said that our lifestyle was very different. I think due to these experiences, I gained insight into the lack of effective communication from my childhood, but I realized that there was a different way, and I was determined to learn more about it. Having my best girlfriend of 25 years, Maria from Northern Spain, has really helped me with communication. She never stops talking, and I am very grateful for that.

In my graduate studies, I had been very interested in the concept of communication competence, and this idea became an essential part of my thesis. In their foundational research Interpersonal Competence, William R. Cupach and Brian H. Spitzberg laid out a foundation defining communication competence. They defined it as “the extent to which objective functions related to communication are fulfilled through cooperative interaction appropriate to the context” (Spitzberg & Cupach 100). In other words, effective communication is not limited to the words a person is trying to say, it is also about the appropriateness of the situation. The importance of having the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately has increased over the last century due to living in a more complex world. How would our world be different today if we would use the principles of communication competence? Would 9/11 be avoided? Could the civil war in Rwanda be stopped? Would absolute peace between Israel and Hezbollah be possible? Would hate crimes be diffused on a local level? The Press Enterprise in an article entitled “Synagogues to Beef up Security” stated on September 5, 2006 that the Jews were the targets in one out of ten hate crimes reported in Riverside and San Bernardino counties last year. Although communication competence needs to be the goal, maybe we need to develop the principles of emotional intelligence to enable us to work together collaboratively to achieve this goal.

Emotional intelligence is an intricate and complex subject, but it gives us hope because it is something we can learn or improve upon. Contrary to the I.Q. (Intelligence Quotient), which changes very little after our teen years, emotional intelligence can continue to develop throughout a lifetime. Therein lies the uniqueness of emotional intelligence; it never plateaus – only develops. While an individual might be highly empathetic but deficient in conflict resolution, there is an opportunity for him or her to learn this skill.

Children have increased their I.Q. since World War I due to better nutrition, more schooling, and smaller nuclear families. As we have grown smarter, we have also seen more of a social isolation in America. Research shows that American children are growing more angry and depressed in the last two decades due to a lack of connectivity (Miller and Smith-Lovin, American Sociological Review, 2006). Whatever the reasons are for this, it seems that increasing our emotional intelligence would be the solution.

Daniel Goleman describes the term emotional literacy which is teaching school-aged children basic social competence skills such as resolving conflicts constructively, impulse control, empathy, and other essential skills of emotional intelligence. New Haven, Connecticut is an example of how an enriched curriculum can change the depressive statistics. This city had the highest proportion of females with AIDS in the nation, high teenage pregnancy and the drug abuse was overwhelming.

Karol DeFalco, the school facilitator will share her success: Teaching Social Competency video.

I recall studying biology, chemistry, and physics in the seventh grade. I was very fortunate to have teachers with high emotional intelligence in the first two subjects. Somehow physics seemed so detached from reality, and the teacher was not able to connect with her students. The teacher was extremely smart and well respected, but as I looked around the class room at my glossy-eyed classmates, I saw some of them drifting off to sleep. This teacher lacked the ability to transfer her passion for physics to us. I was her student for three years, and although I do not blame her for my only ‘B,’ it certainly was a contributing factor for never majoring in science. I would agree with Dr. Goleman “that the generation that is falling behind in emotional intelligence is entering the workforce today.”
(Scene from the movie: Crash) The fifth and final competency of emotional intelligence is social skills. Social skills are essential in dealing with other people’s emotions artfully. In his new book Social Intelligence (2006), Daniel Goleman emphasizes that social skills translate into social facility or relationship management. There are several underlying competencies in adeptness at this skill such as influence, communications, conflict management, leadership and change catalyst. In combination these characteristics can produce an immense social competency within people.

Jonathan Haidt (2006) explores social skills in his book the Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom. He challenges his readers by claiming that reciprocity is the most essential skill for getting along with a variety of people. This tool is closely related to establishing rapport with people. If we develop rapport with our colleagues, we will probably be more creative and more effective in problem-solving and decision-making. Most importantly, we need to invest in people that we know will help us grow, and in turn we will reciprocate this support. I have been very fortunate in creating strong and psychologically healthy relationships over cozy luncheons, intimate dinners, and outings to the Hollywood Bowl with colleagues who are by now dear friends here at Chaffey College. This investment in people has made this workplace a second home for me.

I have always dreamed of being hired to go to parties with a good glass of wine in hand and mingle with the crowd. I still have not had any offers to this full-time, but I do work serving at wine-tasting shows from time to time, and this is where I get to use my communication skills. Effective communication to me is listening openly and discussing issues directly. Strong communication skills must be established to develop superior social skills. The biggest complaint according to Goleman (2006) among American workers is poor communication with management. A majority of these people claim that it prevents them from doing their best work. As faculty, we can facilitate communication with our students by creating an open and safe communication environment in our classrooms.

To have social skills also translates into negotiating and resolving conflict. There is a misconception that if we have developed emotional intelligence, we do not have to deal with conflict. However, when we recognize conflict we need to deal with difficult people and handle tense situations with diplomacy. This has been a challenge for me because in Scandinavia we are taught not to criticize and confront people openly and also to minimize our exposure to “toxic people.” This is a lose-lose strategy. I have had to unlearn and relearn this cultural heritage and develop more collaborative skills by

Keeping communication competence in mind, let me review for you how Daniel Goleman’s emotional intelligence delineates these principles, but first let me introduce Dr. Goleman. Daniel Goleman is a Harvard graduate who worked for The New York Times for 12 years. This is where he wrote On the Brain and closely related topics. He is best known for his ground-breaking research on emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence is not a new idea, but there has been an explosive growth of interest during the past forty years. This is evidenced by the growth in the number of publications since the 1970’s. This concept has been known as “social intelligence,” “non-intellective aspects of a person,” “intrapersonal intelligence” and “social maturity.” I would also add that my predecessors as faculty lecturers of the year, Wayne Hubert and Marie Boyd spoke about a closely related term, “Habits of the Heart.”

Daniel Goleman’s concept of emotional intelligence is a more focused one because it defines a specific set of skills that can be learned. Goleman defines this skill set as “a master aptitude, a capacity that profoundly affects all other abilities, whether facilitating or interfering with them.” Emotional intelligence can be summed up into five characteristics: self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills. I will focus on these specific skills.

Self-awareness is one of the most important skills that we can learn. It shows us how our emotions affect what we are doing and teaches us to make decisions based on our values. It also gives us a clear picture of our strengths and weaknesses, and with this knowledge, we will know what we need to improve upon.

Mindfulness is a closely related concept and it means being aware of our whole self. According to Boyatzis (2002), it is “the capacity to be fully aware of all that one experiences inside the self – body, mind, heart and spirit – and to pay full attention to what is happening around us, the natural world, our surroundings and events.” This mindset can be learned but it is difficult because we can so easily let the world pass us by. Self-awareness and mindfulness are illustrated well in the scene where Dupree (actor Owen Wilson) applies for a job – movie: You, Me & Dupree. His self-awareness and honesty saved him and the company both time and money.
To manage our internal state and impulses is often extremely difficult because so many people are motivated by fear. Emotional self-control is the second characteristic of emotional intelligence. We can change the way we perceive things. Dan Baker (2003) states in his best selling book What Happy People Know that “every fearful and every angry urge – contains a quarter-second window of opportunity in which you can disengage from that urge.” This might not seem like a long time, but it is the ultimate power over perception. I always teach my students that we don’t lose control, we choose to lose control, and if we don’t accept this fact we develop a sense of learned helplessness.

Self-regulation is closely related to personal accountability which includes taking responsibility and taking action. According to Dan Baker, the four “deadly foes” that keep us from having any personal power are: victimization, entitlement, blame, and rescue. Choice is available to anyone who has the courage to claim it. It is also important to realize that we cannot do anything we set our mind to because that is not reality; that is a myth. I know I will never be a pro-athlete or a movie star, but with the limitations that I have, there are still a lot of choices to be made. We do create our own perception of our life.

The third principle of Daniel Goleman’s emotional competence framework is motivation. This relates to how emotional tendencies facilitate to reach our goals and overcome any obstacles as we pursue our purpose. The research shows that the most powerful motivators are internal because if we have a great sense of passion for what we do, we achieve a sense of pride. In our workplace, it is essential that we promote leaders and managers who are inspiring enough to energize their staff and move them forward in the right direction. We all need to draw energy and hope from the people who lead us on a daily basis. This will hopefully lead to an organization with self-motivated individuals who have a drive to achieve and enjoy challenges and thus are empowered.

(Scene from the movie: Coach Carter)
Motivation can not be complete without the presence of optimism. Manz and Neck (2004) explore optimism in their book Mastering Self-Leadership. They state that if we adopt an optimistic view of the world, we will accomplish two things: “we will perceive the world to be a more enjoyable place to live in and we may respond more to the opportunities of life rather than its constraints.”

Optimism can be learned. In Martin Seligman’s book Learned Optimism (2006), he shares his vision on how this can be accomplished. The technique is simple; by changing unproductive thinking to productive thinking we can face defeats and setbacks more easily. Dr. Seligman does caution us that we do not want “blind optimism” but “flexible optimism” – meaning optimism with its “eyes open.” Leaders and managers can overdo optimism, and if they do, they lose a realistic and authentic view of reality. Despite “blind optimism,” I would still surround myself with optimistic people because their positive energy is contagious, and it empowers me to be successful not only at work but in life.

Malcolm Gladwell shares important research findings in his second best selling book Blink (2005) that surgeons who have not been sued are the ones who spend more than 3 minutes with each patient. These are the physicians who participate in active listening and have dialogue with their patients. A highly distinguished pediatrician for Kaiser Permanente in Riverside, Ronald Pearce, reinforces this research by stating when Kaiser Hospital changed its appointments from ten minutes to fifteen minutes; the membership services received fewer complaints. The skill that is being used in these examples is that of empathy which is the fourth principle of emotional intelligence.

Empathy is the force and maybe the most powerful principle of emotional intelligence. This concept translates into being aware of other people’s feelings and being able to project oneself into another person’s frame of reference. And absence of empathy is especially disturbing because it makes people commit crimes without any remorse. Empathy in combination with caring keeps people from harming others. Although, it is imperative to understand that empathy does not necessarily mean agreement. The leaders of big organizations may have to make difficult decisions based on cutbacks, but if the employees are still treated with respect and empathy, they will suffer less as they seek other opportunities.

Mother Teresa’s selfless work among the poor in Calcutta certainly exemplifies empathy. Queen Elizabeth the II invited her for tea at Buckingham Palace, and she agreed to go but refused to partake of the tea because as she stated “the poor do not drink tea.” Jimmie Lai, one of the best maintenance people here at Chaffey College, also illustrates what empathy means. He listens, cares, and serves any of us who work in the Theatre/Art building. On endless occasions when I come to work with a cold, Jimmie is there to serve me green tea, caring about my health. These two very different human beings are superb people and they are some of the role models I want to emulate.

As you can see, empathy is an involved and complex principle, and I believe that one can not learn this concept without honest self-awareness.